



File Code: 1950

Date: September 16, 2014

Dear Interested Party

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Como Forest Health Project is available for review and comment. You can read the document on the Bitterroot National Forest web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot/projects/> or you may request a paper or CD version from the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor's Office or Darby Ranger District.

The project area is located on the Darby Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest in R22W, T4N - Sections PB39, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, PB40, PB41, 26, 27, 34, 35 and PB42; R21W, T4N - Sections 17, 18, PB37, 20, 21, PB38 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32. The project area lies generally between Lake Como and Lost Horse Canyon, and encompasses about 5,711 acres.

The Como Forest Health Project DEIS describes the effects of implementing three alternatives to the proposed action, including the No Action alternative. The purpose of the project is to improve forest resilience to natural disturbances, limit potential mountain pine beetle-caused tree mortality, and reduce fuel loads while maintaining the scenic qualities of the Como Forest Health project area. The project area includes 72 acres of the Selway-Bitterroot Inventoried Roadless Area in which a moderate severity prescribed fire is proposed in Alternatives 2 and 3. The incidental cutting of smaller diameter trees would occur as part of prescribed burning preparation (36CFR 294.13(b)(2)).

The Bitterroot Community Wildfire Protection Plan (DNRC et al., 2006) identifies the Como Forest Health project area as a high priority area for fuels reduction in the wildland-urban interface. Most of the treatments prescribed in the alternatives occur within or adjacent to the wildland-urban interface. In Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, 68%, 64%, and 70% of the treated area is in the wildland-urban interface, respectively. The breakdown of treatments by alternative is:

	Commercial harvest	Non-commercial harvest	Prescribed fire only
Alternative 2	1,476	531	1,319
Alternative 3	1,292	924	943
Alternative 4	1,115	769	202

Note: Most of the commercial and non-commercial harvest would be followed with some type of prescribed fire such as, pile burning, jackpot burning, or understory burn.

Alternative 1 is the No Action alternative and no treatments would occur at this time.

Forest Plan amendments for coarse woody debris and snags are proposed for all action alternatives and Forest Plan amendments are proposed for thermal cover and visual quality objectives in Alternatives 2 and 3.

The Como Forest Health project is subject to 36CFR 218 subparts A and B. Individuals or organizations who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project during a public comment period established by the Responsible Official, such as this one, are eligible to file an objection.

Comments submitted by individuals or organizations must have evidence of timely submission, as defined by 36 CFR 218.25(a)(4), and meet the following requirements outlined in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(3):

- Name and postal address (Email recommended but not required)



- Title of the proposed project or activity
- Specific written comments as defined in 36 CFR 218.2 regarding the proposed project of activity, along with supporting reasons
- Signature or other verification of identity upon request and identification of the individual or entity who authored the comments. For comments listing multiple entities or multiple individuals, a signature or other means of verification must be provided for the individual authorized to represent each entity and for each individual in the case of multiple names. A scanned signature or other means of verifying the identity of the individual or entity representative may be used for electronically submitted comments.
- Individual members of an entity must submit their own comments to establish personal eligibility; comments received on behalf of an entity are considered as those of the entity only.

The Responsible Official for this project is Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor, Julie K. King. Comments may be submitted to the Responsible Official by the following methods:

Mail or hand deliver to: Como Forest Health – Comments  
Forest Supervisor's Office  
Bitterroot National Forest  
1801 N. First  
Hamilton, MT 59840-3114

FAX to: 406-363-7159

Email to: [comments-northern-bitterroot-darby@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-bitterroot-darby@fs.fed.us)

Please put "Comments: Como Forest Health" in the subject line. An automated response should confirm your electronic comment has been received. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format that is readable with optical character recognition software and be searchable.

Date Comments Must Be Received: Within 45 days after publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

If you would like more information, please call Chuck Oliver, Darby District Ranger, at (406) 821-4244 or Sara Grove at (406) 821-1251.

Sincerely,



JULIE K. KING  
Forest Supervisor